

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 069 304

LI 003 970

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TITLE A Proposed Plan for Reference Services for San Diego and Imperial Counties.
INSTITUTION San Diego Public Library, Calif.; Serra Regional Library System, San Diego, Calif.
PUB DATE 69
NOTE 54p.; (23 References)
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Budgets; Library Collections; *Library Cooperation; Library Facilities; *Library Networks; Library Planning; *Library Reference Services; Library Surveys; *Public Libraries

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to assist with the planning for improved reference service in the libraries of San Diego and Imperial counties, California, and to make recommendations regarding the location of area libraries and the relationships of the libraries within the system. The following recommendations are made for the system: (1) libraries should work more closely with other organizations in their communities; (2) objectives should be carefully thought out, clearly set down, and priorities established; (3) coordination of collections building should be a priority of the Serra Reference Center; (4) cooperation with and use of the Associated Science Libraries of San Diego should be explored; (5) development of a public information program; (6) use of the latest developments in communications technology; (7) in-service training for nonprofessionals, and continuing education for professionals; (8) develop projects to further the objectives of the system; and (9) factors important to establishing area libraries. (Author/SJ)

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A PROPOSED PLAN FOR REFERENCE SERVICES FOR
SAN DIEGO AND IMPERIAL COUNTIES

Grace Thomas Stevenson

Serra Regional Library System
San Diego Public Library
1969

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A study of library services inevitably depends on the cooperation of many people. For their generous cooperation this study is indebted to the librarians of San Diego and Imperial counties, to the 49-99 and the Black Gold Systems, the Bay Area Reference Center, the Los Angeles Public Library, and the staff of the California State Library. Special acknowledgment is made to the staffs of the San Diego Public Library and the Serra Reference Center for their interest and assistance.

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A PROPOSED PLAN FOR REFERENCE SERVICES FOR
SAN DIEGO AND IMPERIAL COUNTIES

Purpose and Procedures

The purpose of the present study is to assist with the planning for improved reference service in the libraries of San Diego and Imperial counties and to make recommendations regarding the location of Area Libraries and the relationships of the libraries within the system.

Since the Wheeler survey was both comprehensive and quite recent, it was not necessary to make such an intensive survey of the libraries covered in that report. The statistics were brought up to date, each of the libraries visited, the librarians, and in some cases members of the Library Board, were interviewed. Visits were also made to the headquarters of the San Diego County Library and to thirteen of its branches. In Imperial County the libraries of Brawley, Calexico, El Centro and Imperial City Library, and Imperial County Library headquarters and three of its branches were visited. Three other systems were visited to learn from their purpose, experience, and procedures. These were the 49-99 System headquarters in Stockton, the Bay Area Reference Center in the San Francisco Public Library, and the Information Center of the Black Gold System in Santa Barbara. Miss Barbara Tuthill of the Serra Reference



Center joined the consultant in Santa Barbara. Together we also talked with the staff of the Los Angeles Public Library about their proposed demonstration program of research level service to the libraries of the Black Gold and Metropolitan Systems. The librarians of these, and other institutions, were cooperative, friendly, and interested. The consultant met twice with the Executive Committee of the Serra Regional System and had several discussions with the state library staff.

Background

Several California studies completed previously have helped to provide solid ground work for this study. The survey made by Joseph L. Wheeler in 1964 reported in the Proposed Regional Library System for the San Diego Area¹ resulted in the establishment of the Serra Regional Library System. The Martin-Bowler² report of their state-wide survey of public libraries, published a few months later, presented a plan for a state-wide library structure. The recommendations made by these two surveys have dominated the development of public library service in San Diego County and have been used as a basis for the present study

1. Joseph L. Wheeler, Report on a Proposed Regional Library System for the San Diego Area, San Diego Public Library, 1965.

2. Lowell A. Martin and Roberta Bowler, Public Library Service Equal to the Challenge of California, Sacramento, California State Library, 1965.

and recommendations. A Master Plan for the Development of Public Library Service in the State of California,³ adopted by the California Library Association in 1967, was also a constant source of reference.

Serra Regional Library System

The cooperative regional system recommended by Wheeler, now comprising six independent libraries--San Diego, Carlsbad, Chula Vista, Coronado, National City, and Oceanside--was established in 1965. One independent library, Escondido, and San Diego County Library have not become members of the system. San Diego County Library has not been able to meet the \$2.50 per capita support required, but they will do so in the coming fiscal year. The Board of the Escondido Public Library has not been willing to accept system membership. The system is administered by an Executive Committee consisting of the head librarians of the member libraries which meets once a month.

An initial grant of \$10,000 for books is made to each library joining the system and grants from both federal and state funds continue to enrich book collections and improve services. A special Serra Library System card, good at all member libraries, is issued by member libraries

3. Master Plan for the Development of Public Library Service in the State of California. Reprint from the California Librarian, April, 1968. California State Library.

to their own borrowers in good standing. Each member library will lend its materials to all registered borrowers of the system.

Serra Reference Center

In September 1965 the Serra Reference Center was established and housed in the San Diego Public Library. Its objective is to provide in-depth reference service to member libraries and to locate information not found in their collections. The Center has a staff of two professional persons, a library assistant, and a typist. TWX connection is maintained with all member libraries except Coronado which uses the telephone. There are truck deliveries twice weekly to Chula Vista and National City. Mail is used to the other libraries, but this will change to truck service when volume justifies. Greyhound bus service is used occasionally for urgently needed materials. The reference staff, after exhausting the considerable resources of the San Diego Public Library, turns to any other available source including the academic and special libraries of San Diego, the State Library, as well as out-of-state sources. The Center has compiled Current Periodicals, a listing of over 2000 magazines received by the libraries in the system, and issues a newsletter of timely reference information, Serra Byline, irregularly. The Serra Reference Center Report for 1967-68 reports the following (Table I):

Table I. Use of Serra Reference Center.

Date	Reference Questions Answered	Research Questions Answered ^a	Inter- Library Loans Borrowed	TWX Messages	Photo- Copies	Serra Cards Issued
1966-67	2578	-	1148	1083	109	4211
1967-68	2454	1337	1463	930	97	3653

^aQuestions were not broken down by reference or research during the first year. The distinction is made by the length of time it takes to find the answer.

The system also compiles bibliographies when needed. In 1966-67 twenty-two bibliographies were compiled; in 1967-68, twenty.

In April 1968, the Serra Library System applied to the California State Library for funds with which to extend the work of the Serra Reference Center, bringing in for reference service the libraries of Imperial County and those libraries within San Diego County not then members of the system as project libraries. Each library, as it came into the project, was to receive a \$5,000 grant to improve its collection of reference books and the San Diego Public Library received a \$60,000 grant to strengthen its collection enough to extend library loan and reference services to non-member libraries. TWX connections were established with selected libraries. The project provides for two

clerks and two professional staff members and a reference coordinator to take care of the increased work load and conduct in-service training.

The Martin-Bowler report recommended as a fourth level of library service the establishment of reference and research centers:

1. Super-libraries needed in the concentrated metropolitan areas of California, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and a third in Sacramento to serve the rapidly developing population, not solely because of large populations but also because of special and technical nature of business and educational enterprises in these centers.⁴

San Diego was not cited by Martin and Bowler as a location for one of the proposed reference and research centers, but factors in its growth and industrial development make it a natural for such a center. Since 1960 the population of San Diego County has increased 30.5 per cent. San Diego is the center of the 11th Naval District and it has become a center for the aircraft, electronics, and rocket industries.

There are four institutions of higher education in the county as well as the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. The libraries of the academic institutions, the special libraries of industry and of the government installations, plus the public libraries, provide a concentration of library services. With this in view for the future the Serra Reference Service has begun.

4. Martin and Bowler, op. cit., p. 76.

The Individual Public Libraries in San Diego County

Though there has been an estimated population gain in the whole of San Diego County of 142,806⁵ since the Wheeler survey in 1964, it was the opinion of the librarians interviewed that this increase has not altered appreciably the character of the population. There has been an increase of 4.2% in the non-white population and 3.7% in the Spanish surname population in San Diego City since 1960,⁶ and the librarian in National City expressed the opinion that there had been an increase in these ethnic groups in that city also. Though these groups, unfortunately, are often in the lower income and educational brackets, their proportion in the increased population is probably not sufficient to alter the character of the population as revealed in the U. S. Census of 1960. At that time the median school years completed in the United States was 10.6; in California, 12.1; in the six cities of San Diego County for which figures were available (with one exception) the median ranged from 12.1 to 12.5. In National City the median was 10.9.⁷ In 1960 the estimated family income for five of these cities

5. San Diego County Planning Department. Population and Housing - San Diego County, July 1, 1968.

6. San Diego Union, December 27, 1968.

7. Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1963.

was above the national average.⁸ Table II compares the gains made by the libraries since the figures quoted by Wheeler in 1964.⁹

The Wheeler report made a twenty-year projection of services to be provided (1964-1984).¹⁰ Though it is recognized that progress toward an established goal is not necessarily made in a regular mathematical progression, it is interesting to note what progress has been made by the libraries in the four-year span--one-fifth of the time (see Table III). No projections were made for the San Diego County Library. Tables II and V show the considerable gains it has made since 1964.

Forecasting population growth in Southern California is a chancy business as the projections demonstrate. Coronado far exceeded the population growth predicted, while Oceanside and San Diego fell well behind theirs. These discrepancies do, of course, alter the validity of other projections. Chula Vista, with a minor population gain, short on growth of both collection and staff, showed a tidy gain in circulation. Carlsbad, with a population gain a little less than anticipated, enjoyed considerable gains in all other categories. A handsome new building

8. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population*, 1960.

9. Wheeler, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

10. Wheeler, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-36.

Table II. Population Expenditures, Collections, San Diego County Libraries.

City	Date ^a	Popula- tion Served ^b	Square Miles	Tax Rate Per \$100	Total Operating Expenditure	Expendi- ture Per Capita
San Diego City	1964	636,375	302.5	.179	1,545,455	2.42
	1968	680,700	307.023	.19 ^a	2,408,966	3.40
San Diego County	1964	367,120	3,997.2	.10	631,503	1.72
	1968	423,876	same	.128	959,393	2.26
Carlsbad	1964	11,817	11	.12	42,506	3.61
	1968	13,850	11.17	.19	68,971	5.17
Chula Vista	1964	50,669	14	.125	113,191	2.28
	1968	62,300	15.35	.14	192,376	3.29
Coronado	1964	17,966	5.2	.17	69,485	3.86
	1968	25,250	5.2	.165	90,066	3.51
Escondido	1964	24,264	10+	.12	33,818	1.55
	1968	31,650	14.27	.12	62,775	2.24
National City	1964	34,208	7.92	.21	91,339	2.80
	1968	37,000	8.1	.23	107,208	2.84
Oceanside	1964	32,975	30	.18	82,769	2.56
	1968	37,100	35.15	.19	137,941	4.33

^a1964 figures from Joseph K. Wheeler, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
 1968 figures from librarian's 1967-68 statistical reports
 to the California State Library.

^bSan Diego County Planning - Regional Planning Division.
 Population and Housing San Diego County, January 1, 1969.

Expenditure Books and Periodicals	Expendi- ture Salaries	Total Book Stock	New Volumes Per Year	New Titles Per Year	Periodical Subscrip- tions
203,985	1,141,536	705,505	69,665	10,098	1,426
318,701	1,489,071	909,996	87,134	12,736	1,538
87,543	363,071	300,863	34,761	5,545	151
127,229	489,494	410,282	40,666	6,786	196
11,500	19,916	26,030	3,000	no record	106
13,000	40,018	47,699	7,136	no record	140
19,489	83,505	56,723	5,552	4,353	185
33,000	136,735	76,401	8,401	6,265	326
12,793	48,773	36,724	3,444	3,146	136
15,974	63,531	42,540	3,844	3,189	162
5,000	25,000	27,975	1,913	no record	100
13,900	42,435	32,014	2,385	2,162	151
15,896	68,595	49,915	4,524	4,377	161
19,737	77,062	57,044	4,790	4,324	229
17,956	57,673	52,168	4,572	no record	146
34,200	69,237	70,635	5,079	4,575	443

Table III. Projections for 1984 and Rate of Accomplishment.

	Popu- lation	Expend- iture	Collec- tion	Circu- lation	Staff
<u>San Diego P.L.</u>					
1964	638,675	1,545,455	705,505	3,118,809	220
Projected 1984	1,107,000	4,228,740	1,383,750	7,195,500	551
Actual 1968	680,700	2,408,966	909,996	3,393,765	255
1/5 Projection	732,340	2,081,112	841,154	3,834,147	286.5
Progress	- 51,640	+ 327,854	+ 68,842	- 540,382	- 31.5
<u>Carlsbad P.L.</u>					
1964	11,800	42,500	26,000	74,770	4
Projected 1984	25,000	95,500	68,850	237,500	12.5
Actual 1968	13,850	68,900	47,699	114,754	6
1/5 Projection	14,440	53,100	34,570	107,316	5.6
Progress	- 590	+ 15,800	+ 13,129	+ 7,428	+ .4
<u>Chula Vista P.L.</u>					
1964	50,600	113,000	56,723	332,060	16.5
Projected 1984	100,000	382,000	250,000	900,000	50
Actual 1968	62,300	192,376	76,401	463,114	20
1/5 Projection	60,480	166,800	95,378	445,648	23.2
Progress	+ 1,820	+ 25,576	- 18,977	+ 17,466	- 3.2
<u>Coronado P.L.</u>					
1964	18,000	69,500	36,724	187,657	10.25
Projected 1984	25,000	95,000	75,000	237,500	12.50
Actual 1968	25,250	90,066	42,540	154,336	10.5
1/5 Projection	19,400	74,600	44,379	197,625	10.75
Progress	+ 5,850	+ 15,466	- 1,839	- 43,289	- .25

Table III.--Continued

<u>Escondido P.L.</u>					
1964	24,264	33,818	27,975	161,469	7
Projected 1984	70,000	245,000	210,000	660,500	12
Actual 1968	31,650	62,775	32,014	166,877	8.5
1/5 Projection	33,410	74,038	64,380	261,275	8.0
Progress	- 1,760	- 11,263	- 32,366	- 94,398	+ .5
<u>National City P.L.</u>					
1964	34,208	31,339	49,915	330,169	10.5
Projected 1984	50,000	175,000	115,000	475,000	25
Actual 1968	37,000	107,208	57,044	225,635	12.5
1/5 Projection	37,366	108,071	63,132	359,135	13.25
Progress	- 366	- 863	- 6,088	- 133,500	- .75
<u>Oceanside P.L.</u>					
1964	32,975	79,971	52,169	200,573	13
Projected 1984	100,000	382,000	225,000	950,000	50
Actual 1968	37,100	137,941	70,635	182,920	12
1/5 Projection	46,380	140,377	86,735	350,458	20
Progress	- 9,280	- 2,346	- 16,100	- 167,538	- 8

invariably sends library use soaring. Coronado, with a good proportional gain in both population and budget, was short on book collection, circulation and staff. The projected population gain for Oceanside was so far off as to make the other projections meaningless. Oceanside is hemmed in on one side by the U. S. Marine Base and fluctuations in the population there affect all of its activities. This is true to some extent of all the coastal cities. San Diego City fell well below the population projection, and circulation did not increase as anticipated, but considerable gains were made in the expenditures and bookstock. San Diego needs more service outlets and the fact that the number of staff also fell short undoubtedly affected the circulation.

Budgets

Though all of the libraries have had an increase in total operating expenditures, some of them considerable, the population increase has usually kept this from showing a comparable increase in per capita expenditures. Furthermore, in 1968 the American Library Association published Costs of Public Library Services: 1968¹¹ which, taking into account increased costs for all library expenditures, established a new minimum per capita standard of \$5.31 for systems serving one million people. All of the libraries

11. Public Library Association, Costs of Public Library Services: 1968. Chicago, American Library Association, 1968.

show an increase in their tax rate per \$100, but in 1967-1968 only National City had reached the .20 per \$100 mentioned by Wheeler as a minimum. These are the figures shown in the annual report sent to the State Library in 1967-68 (the only complete set of figures at this writing.) Per capita expenditures and tax rate equivalents for 1968-69 move Carlsbad, Coronado, and San Diego City above the .20 figure. The notable increase in the assessed valuation since 1964, combined with slight increases in the tax rate per \$100, has provided the increased budgets, though the population growth, in most instances, defeats efforts to achieve the minimum per capita standard (see Table IV).

Physical Facilities

Two libraries have new buildings since 1964. Both Carlsbad and San Diego County Library are in new and spacious quarters. National City will begin an addition soon which will almost double its floor space and San Diego Public Library is completing an unfinished portion of its central library which will add 6,450 feet to their floor space. Chula Vista has included a new library building in its recently developed city plan, and it is hoped construction may begin by 1970. Oceanside is in desperate need of a new building. The present building is dangerously overcrowded, possibly a fire hazard, which hampers all of the library's services. Though not so badly hampered as

Table IV. 1968-69 Financial Picture.^a

City	Assessed Valuation	Tax Rate Per \$1000	Total Operating Expenditure (Ant.)	Expenditure Per Capita (Est.)	Population (Est.) ^b
San Diego	1,221,138,730	.21	2,593,686	3.81	698,000
San Diego Co.	785,799,730	.122	1,103,357	2.60	432,000
Carlsbad	41,899,600	.26	85,984	6.42	14,300
Chula Vista	140,252,330	.165	206,679	3.33	64,300
Coronado	33,590,600	.30	101,063	3.95	23,200
Escondido	67,372,960	.15	83,905	2.61	35,200
National City	48,789,750	.28	127,553	2.77	42,300
Oceanside	74,764,610	.19	167,669	4.58	38,700

^aFigures taken from annual reports for fiscal year 1967-68 submitted to the California State Library.

^bSan Diego County Planning - Regional Planning Division, op. cit.

Oceanside, Escondido also needs more space to accommodate expanding collections and services.

Table V shows the increase in staff for all libraries as well as the development in some service areas. Several libraries record a notable increase in reference service, a reflection of the work done by the Serra Reference Center.

Imperial County

The inclusion of Imperial County in the Serra Reference Project is in line with the recommendation of Martin and Bowler¹² who recommended that it might be combined in a regional system with either San Diego or Los Angeles counties.

Imperial County is slightly larger (4,507 square miles) than San Diego County (4,314). A special census in 1965 showed a county population of 78,019¹³ and a projected population for 1980 of 99,800. Much of the county is mountainous desert, but the Imperial Irrigation District has developed a fertile agricultural valley south of the Salton Sea, and there is further arable land directly northwest of the sea. In 1960, 39.9% of the then population was engaged in agriculture, a drop from 52.4% in 1930 probably due, chiefly, to mechanization. The slack was

12. Martin and Bowler, op. cit., p. 75.

13. Imperial Valley Press.

Table V. Personnel, Circulation, and Services for San Diego County Libraries.

City	Year	Personnel		Circulation	Reference Questions	Reference List ^a No. of Titles Held
		Prof.	FTE			
San Diego City	1964	77.5	220	3,118,809	876,441	NA
	1968	84.5	255	3,393,765	1,088,769	312
San Diego County	1964	12	67	1,689,256	25,823	NA
	1968	18	83	1,827,692	72,542	249
Carlsbad	1964	1	3	74,771	no record	NA
	1968	1	6	114,754	5,195	184
Chula Vista	1964	5	16.6	332,067	18,006	NA
	1968	8.5	20	463,114	36,530	272
Coronado	1964	4	10.25	187,675	6,448	NA
	1968	4	10.5	154,336	7,169	219
Escondido	1964	2	7	161,469	no record	NA
	1968	2.5	8.5	166,877	no record	181
National City	1964	5	10.5	330,169	9,769	NA
	1968	5	12.5	225,635	14,853	220
Oceanside	1964	3	13	200,573	no record	NA
	1968	5	12	182,920	7,184	244
C - Complete		S - Selective		NA - Not Available		

^aList prepared by San Diego Public Library from list used by Martin and Bowler, *op. cit.*

^bResearched first in department of origin.

Inter-Library Loans		Depository Status		Hours Open Per Week	City & County Documents File	Reference Titles	Use of ILL Bor.	Serra Reference Center Reference Quest	Photo- copy
Loaned	Borrowed	Federal	State						
83	796	S	C	62.5					
1,776	917	C	C	63	Yes	NA		726 ^b	9
276	291	S	S	40 hdqtrs. 40 hdqtrs.			Not a member		
30	300	No	No	50					
86	516	No	No	61	No	770	338	494	28
-	183	No	No	63		-			
NA	689	No	S	63	No	1,457	480	854	28
-	22			53					
NA	NA	No	No	52	No		38	83	1
-	263			55		-			
		No	S	55	S	743	Not a member		
-	62			65.5					
2	272	No	No	65.5	NA	3,190	233	380	9
-	-	No	S	66	City	-			
140	790	No	S	69	City	2,058	374	650	11
ILL - Inter-Library Loans									

taken up by employment in retail and wholesale trade, government installations, and transportation and utilities.

Employment in manufacturing dropped during this period from 7.3% to 5.7%.¹⁴ In 1967 the gross value of agricultural production, including livestock and dairy products, was \$2,365,000--a major source of income.¹⁵ The city of Mexicali, which lies across the Mexican border from Imperial County, is a prime market for the county's goods and services. In 1960 residents of Mexicali spent approximately \$11,500,000 in Imperial County.¹⁶

More than 50% of the population is concentrated in three cities--Brawley, Calexico, and El Centro. Holtville (3,538) and Imperial (3,271) are the only other towns that could be considered non-rural. There are independent public libraries in Brawley, Calexico, El Centro and Imperial, and the Imperial County Library, also in Imperial. Tables VI and VII provide information about these libraries comparable to that for the San Diego County libraries in Tables II and V.

14. Real Estate Research Corporation, Los Angeles. Analysis of Economic Potential, Imperial County, California, 1962.

15. Imperial County, California, Board of Supervisors. Imperial County Agriculture - 1967.

16. Real Estate Research Corporation, Los Angeles, op. cit., p. 68.

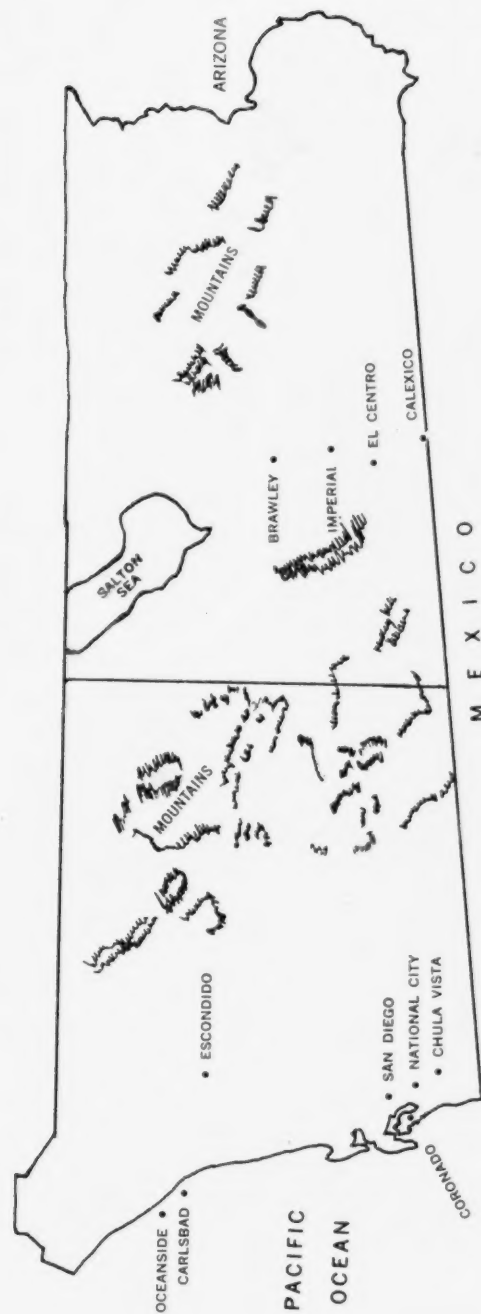


Table VI. Population, Expenditures, Collections, Imperial County Libraries.

City	Year	Population Served	Square Miles	Tax Rate Per \$100	Total Operating Expenditure	Expenditure Per Capita
Brawley	1964	13,752	-	.32	25,823	-
	1968	15,350	2	.35	43,179	2.87
Calexico	1964	7,992	-	.55	24,519	-
	1968	9,156	2	.33	28,598	-
El Centro	1964	18,340	-	NA	55,986	-
	1968	19,414	3.54	.256	86,737	3.72
Imperial City	1964	3,007	2	.15	11,000	NA
	1968	3,271	2	.15	11,500	3.54
Imperial County	1964	49,508	NA	-	36,788 ^a	-
	1968	77,800	4,507	.03	27,245	.79

NA - Not Available

^aIncludes payment from school districts for service.

^bSchool collection no longer included in book count.

Expenditure Books and Periodicals	Expenditure Salaries	Total Book Stock	New Volumes Per Year	New Titles Per Year	Periodical Subscrip- tions
5,525	18,861	30,755	1,487	NA	115
6,551	20,631	33,609	1,456	1,099	114
6,000	15,279	16,540	1,671	1,595	77
4,363	21,983	22,070	-	-	76
6,855	41,546	52,454	2,305	1,622	113
11,523	45,280	58,212	2,682	2,181	123
-	-	-	605	-	24
2,500	7,500	15,517	517	NA	23
11,886	23,312	81,674	4,884	931	40
7,216	30,101	33,305 ^b	2,069	1,307	40 hdqtrs

Table VII. Personnel, Circulation and Services, Imperial County Libraries.

City	Year	Personnel		Circulation	Reference Questions	Reference List ^a No. of Titles Held
		Prof.	All Staff FTE			
Brawley	1964			77,824	NA	
	1968	2	3	69,796	NA	169
Calexico	1964			38,965	NA	
	1968	-	3.5	30,746	NA	114
El Centro	1964			136,682	6,037	NA
	1968	1	8	147,832	7,054	193
Imperial City	1964	-		15,147	NA	
	1968	-	1.5	22,740	NA	76
Imperial County	1964	-		64,462	537	NA
	1968	-	2	60,486	646	83

NA - Not Available

^aList prepared by San Diego Public Library from list used by Martin and Bowler, op. cit.

Inter-Library Loans		Depository Status		Hours Open Per Week	City & County Documents File	Reference Titles
Loaned	Borrowed	Federal	State			
35	170			51	No	NA
30	225		No	64	No	NA
NA	NA			49	S	NA
NA	NA		No	49	S	503
34	84			64	No	NA
49	119	-	C	64	Selective	NA
NA	NA			41.5		NA
NA	NA	-	No	41.5	No	NA
17	129			40	No	NA
12	132	-	No	40	No	NA
C - Complete		S - Selective				

A sparse population, widely scattered, as in Imperial County, makes the provision of library service difficult. The education and income levels of the population are considerably lower than that of San Diego County, of California, and of the United States as a whole. The large number of agricultural workers in the county probably accounts for the differences since agricultural workers are usually lower in both of these scales (see Table VIII).

Table VIII. Population Characteristics of Imperial County.^a

	Median School Yrs. Completed 25 Yrs. Old and Older	% with 4 Yrs. College	% Less than 5 Yrs. of School	% Employees Classified as Professional, Technical, Kindred Workers
U.S. (1960)	10.6	7.7	8.4	11.2
California	12.1	10.7	5.7	13.7
San Diego County	12.1	10.0	3.3	14.9
Imperial County	9.0	5.4	23.3	6.8

^aCalifornia State, California Statistical Abstract, 1968. Sacramento, Documents Section.

The Individual Public Libraries in Imperial County

In the following discussion, the Imperial County Library will be considered separately.

Physical Facilities

Brawley Public Library is well housed in a Spanish-style building which is part of the Civic Center. There is room on the lot for expansion which may be needed in a few years. Calexico Public Library is in a tiny, old Carnegie building in a park next to the City Hall and a few blocks from the main shopping area. The building is seriously overcrowded with very little seating space and should be replaced with a new building as soon as possible. The library building at El Centro has had two additions and a third is being planned. This addition might make possible breaking up the long range of shelving in the east wing and making it more inviting by installing an informal seating arrangement.

The city library in Imperial--an architectural curiosity--is also very overcrowded and not well located, though in such a small town, with its activities rather unaccountably dispersed, this may not be too serious. If a new building should be erected, thought should be given to a possible better site, and whether a new building or an addition, help should be sought from a library building

consultant or copies of building plans borrowed from the American Library Association.

Collections

It was possible to give only the most perfunctory consideration to the collections held by the libraries. On paper they all have a respectable per capita count, but much discarding of worn and out-of-date titles should be done in some libraries. This would improve the quality of the collections and their appeal to patrons as well as provide needed shelf space. Those library boards which have not adopted a policy regarding gifts should do so. This would enable the board, or the librarian, to refuse, without embarrassment, those gifts which are not suitable to a well-selected, modern public library collection.

There is a lack of book selection tools and of professional guidance in book selection in smaller libraries. Too much reliance is placed on sets, particularly juveniles, which have, in too many cases, been hastily put together by some publishers recently in response to federal funds, and which, if not actually meretricious, are too often shallow, repetitive, and dully uniform in appearance. The use of Plastikleer jackets would be well worth the investment to brighten the look of the shelves. In all of these libraries more thought should be given to the interests and needs of the population served and more care given to book

selection in order to build the kind of collection which is really fitted to that particular community. The Serra Reference Center, acting in a consultative capacity could, and should, render good service in this regard.

Staff

There are only three professional librarians in the Imperial County public libraries, two in Brawley, one in El Centro. The professional position in the Imperial County Library has been vacant for two years. There should be two more professional librarians in El Centro, one for reference and one for children's work.

Budgets

None of the libraries reaches the standard 3.82 per capita established in 1963.¹⁷ For the independent library this figure should now be 5.00-6.00.

Imperial County Library

Physical Facilities. The Imperial County Library was moved recently from the basement of the Imperial County Court House in El Centro to a building belonging to a veteran's organization in Imperial--a building referred to as "The Alamo." Since there is a fair amount of business with county officials and agencies the location in Imperial

17. Public Library Association, Costs of Public Library Service, 1963, Chicago American Library Association, 1964.

is not convenient. The move is an indication of the low priority the library enjoys. The veteran's organization still occupies the rear of the building and the library staff goes through this ill-kept section to use the unheated lavatories.

Staff. The position of Librarian of the Imperial County Library has been vacant since the former librarian, who had been there for many years, retired two years ago. Neither the salary offered nor the quality of service dictated by the present budget is likely to attract another professional person. The library has been administered for the past two years by two responsible and interested non-professional persons and a clerk who have been on the staff for some time. Together they have maintained the service, but they realize that they have neither the authority nor the professional competence to make the changes which would give Imperial County a viable library instead of a dying institution.

Services. The library does not promote across-the-counter service since there is a public library a short distance away, but it will give service to anyone coming in. It acts as a clearing house for reference questions for its branches and borrows from the State Library, or other sources, for them.

Ten branches are maintained in the county and there are two affiliated libraries, Calexico and Imperial.

(Affiliates have their own library boards and separate budgets but receive sizable loans of books from the county.) Six of these branches are open five hours a week or less. Three of them circulate less than a thousand books a year (see Table IX). All of the branches are visited monthly, new books taken each time and unused books returned. Bookmobile service to the smaller branches, and perhaps other communities in the county, would probably give better service. The branch at Holtville is in an attractive, small new building with a book collection of about 6500 volumes and a circulation of 19,500.

School Services. Imperial County Library still maintains the extensive service to schools characteristic of California county libraries and others, years ago, but since abandoned nearly everywhere. Educators discovered some time ago that the library needs of students could only be adequately met by libraries within the schools themselves. The intensified curriculum and new teaching methods require a number and variety of library materials which should be readily available. The federal funds for school libraries granted for the past few years under the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 have made it possible for schools to build their own library collections.

The county library is now providing classroom sets, changed monthly, to fifteen schools in nine school districts. The manual labor of loading and unloading the book bundles

Table IX. Imperial County Branches, Inventory and Hours.

Location	Circulation	Books	Hours
Calexico ^a	1,248	2,065	
Calipatria	7,467	3,049	Mon., Wed., Fri. 1 to 5:30 P.M. Thurs. eve. - 2 hrs.
Holtville	19,535	6,661	Daily 1 to 9 P.M.
Imperial ^a	10,674	2,046	
Magnolia	2,735	791	Friday - 3 hrs.
Niland	3,464	2,655	Mon., Wed., Fri. 1 to 6 P.M.
Ocotillo	960	431	Thurs. 2-1/2 hrs.
Plaster City	957	590	Sat. - 2-1/2 hrs.
Salton City	2,002	1,110	Thurs. 2-1/2 hrs.
Seeley	2,316	1,094	Tues., Thurs. 6 hrs. per week
Westmorland	7,376	2,361	Mon., Thurs. 12 hrs. per week
Winterhaven	967	302	Fri., 5 hrs.
Headquarters	708		40 hrs. per week

^aAffiliated.

The above figures do not include a small branch that was open only a few months and circulated only 77 books for the year 1967-68.

Total circulation for all branches 1967-68 and headquarters, 60,486.

is done by the acting librarian, a job no woman should be asked to do. In 1966 the number of volumes in the county library's schools collection was nearly 60% of the total collection. National standards set a minimum of 25% to 40% for the percentage of juveniles in a collection.¹⁸ In fairness to the adult population of Imperial County, and in accordance with more progressive educational methods, this service should be discontinued and the school districts should assume responsibility for the school libraries. This would enable the county library to build up its adult collection for better service to the total community. The books now in the schools' collection should be weeded for discards, and those suitable for use either given to the schools or, as many as needed, retained in the county library's juvenile collection for use in its branches.

Collection. In 1968 the Imperial County Library had a total of 33,305 books, not including the school collection, to serve 52,086 people -- little better than one-half volume per capita. They should have had at least two books¹⁹ per capita for a total of about 105,000. There are many old, out-of-date and badly worn books in the

18. Public Library Association. Just Between Ourselves. Report of the Statistical Standards Committee, May, 1967. Chicago, American Library Association.

19. Joseph Wheeler and Herbert Goldhor, Practical Administration of Public Libraries, New York, Harper, 1962, p. 135.

collection which should be discarded. The number of periodical subscriptions is insufficient and there is no system for regular acquisition of county documents.

Budget. Public library statistics for 1966-67²⁰ reveal that the tax rate equivalents of only three libraries in the state are as low, or lower, than that of Imperial County--Livermore, Upper Lake District, and Vernon. Comparison of Imperial with five other counties with comparable populations makes evident that this is not a case of economic necessity (see Table X).

The population base of Imperial County, outside of the incorporated cities, is not large enough to support even minimal library service. With the exception of the libraries in El Centro and Brawley, which should have better financial support and more staff, all of the libraries in the county show the effects of years of financial starvation, neglect, and lack of understanding of the contribution good library service makes to the educational, economic, and cultural life of a community. It was not just luck and the availability of transportation that made San Diego County a center for industry. Educational institutions and good library services which can meet the research needs of complex industrial development, such as are found in San Diego County, are factors in modern plant location. The

20. California State Library. News Notes of California Libraries, 63:No. 1, Winter 1968.

Table X. Library Expenditures of Six Counties - 1967 (rev.).

County	Population ^a	Square ^a Miles	Assessed ^a Valuation	Library Operating Expenditures	Tax Rate Equivalent
El Dorado	44,800	1,789	170,368,000	117,232	.07
Imperial	77,800	4,507	188,481,000	36,323	.03
Madera	43,800	2,153	141,170,000	121,439	.09
Mendocino	51,100	3,511	112,269,000	97,264	.12
Placer	74,200	1,505	215,177,000	117,025	.08
Siskiyou	34,300	6,325	85,756,000	109,478	.14

^aCalifornia, State. Statistical Abstract. Sacramento, Documents Section, 1968, pp. 1-12-205.

survey of Imperial County prepared by the Real Estate Research Corporation had this to say in regard to locational characteristics of Imperial with respect to manufacturing:

Location of plant facilities is influenced by local social and institutional conditions. The attitude of the people toward industry, stability of local government and local taxes for services, appearance and services provided by the community such as schools [libraries], hospitals, churches, shopping facilities, etc.

Population of the valley is relatively small and does not provide a sufficient labor supply to meet the demands of a large manufacturing complex requiring special skills ²¹

The light industry mostly sought for the southwest requires a supply of skilled labor and able executives. Good education at all levels is a must for the development of such a labor supply. Libraries are an integral part of education. Library service in Imperial County is in a crisis situation. It would seem that the first step toward improved service would be the consolidation of the El Centro Public Library and the Imperial County Library into a County-City system, provided the support from Imperial County could be increased to the point where the county paid its share so that service to the county did not weaken the service now provided by the El Centro library to its patrons. However, the work on which this report is based

²¹. Real Estate Research Corporation, Los Angeles. Analysis of Economic Potential, Imperial County, California, 1962, p. 68.

did not permit a study of the situation in sufficient depth to make firm recommendations of this kind. A thorough study should be made of library service in Imperial County, its resources and needs, and county officials should act upon the recommendations of that survey.

Recommendations

Public Library Systems in the United States makes the statement:

There is a growing trend toward centralized reference centers with good interlibrary loan mechanisms. Apart from the new regional centers, where reference collections will supplement those of community libraries, there is some consideration being given to reference centers which tie in the resources of college, university, and special libraries.²²

California is a part of this trend as visits to other system centers made clear. Each of these is proceeding somewhat differently, as they should, adapting themselves to their own local situations.

This individual adaptation is dependent upon the knowledge the library staff has of the clientele for which its services are planned.

Outsiders and librarians both agree that all too many public libraries today are offering services to a largely unknown and anonymous public, earnest service, to be sure and remarkably diversified, but at the same time quite impersonal and group-oriented. Maybe this kind of service is

22. Nelson Associates. Public Library Systems in the United States. Chicago, American Library Association, 1969, p. 23.

as it should be, or as it only could be, but even the best service, for it to be effective to business and industry, must also be particular and personal, and adjusted to the individual. Special library service is.²³

What this comes to is--what conception does the library board and staff have of the library's function in its community? Conversation with some of the librarians gave the impression that they were not very close to the life of their communities, not too clear in their thinking about the functions of their libraries, nor of the proposed reference center. Public libraries, supported by public funds have, among other responsibilities, the responsibility to (a) plan the best possible services for that public, which means they must have sufficient knowledge of its needs, (b) they must make people aware of the library resources available to them, for which they have paid, so that these resources can be of maximum service to the community. That librarians largely fail in this regard is amply documented in the Bonn report which should be required reading for every librarian in the Serra System. Richard Coenenberg puts it very well.

Librarians, however, are not noted for their zeal in developing new markets for library services, even though they would gain more support for the library if they were able to give meaningful

23. George S. Bonn, Technical Information for California Business and Industry. Sacramento, California State Library, 1966, p. 31.

service to that segment of the community which most strongly influences the distribution of city funds.²⁴

1. All of the libraries should plan ways of giving more consideration to what Lowell Martin refers to as "outreach"--to working more closely with the other agencies, institutions, and organizations in their communities.

These are great sources of information about what a community is doing, what it thinks, what it needs in the way of library service. They are also bearers of news--the good news that the library is interested in the community's problems and is prepared and willing to make its appropriate contribution to their solution. It will take both more staff and better resources to do this.

One obvious service "to that segment of the community which strongly influences the distribution of city funds" is service to the city administration and city offices. California has a penchant for putting its libraries in city centers, not necessarily the best location, but a vantage point for service to city officers and employees. With the exception of the Governmental Reference Library, financed jointly by the San Diego City and San Diego County libraries, none of the libraries have taken

24. Richard Coenenberg, Synergizing Reference Service in the San Francisco Bay Region. ALA Bulletin, 62:1379-83, Dec. 1968.

real advantage of this opportunity by building up collections of books, documents, reports, etc., with which to give intensive service to the city government, at the same time developing a pattern of service which would keep officials informed of these materials.

2. The library's objectives must be carefully thought out, clearly set down, and priorities established.

In San Diego County public service objectives should take into consideration the variety of academic and special libraries within the area so as to augment and supplement existing resources. The hours spent in deciding on objectives and priorities will save time, and both confusion and diffusion of effort later.

3. The Serra Reference System should make the coordination in the building of collections a priority.

Some of the libraries are so close together that it would be only practical for them to come to a joint agreement as to which should purchase expensive reference books. This can apply, also, to the general collections. If any library is already strong in one area, let it continue to build up that subject field. In those subject fields where no library has particular strength agreement can be reached as to which library will acquire the strong collection. The building of all collections should take into consideration the resources of other types of libraries within the area. The Serra Regional Library System has

adopted the geographical, or regional, type of development, but this does not obviate the possibility, indeed the desirability, of some future development along subject lines as outlined by Swank²⁵ and as proposed by Becker and Hayes²⁶ in their plan for a library network for Washington State.

It is the new Title III of the LSCA, however, that puts the question of coordination among the several types of libraries squarely before the library community. The Act continues to support the development of exclusively public library systems in the several states, but it also points clearly to the desirability of breaking down old barriers and habits of thought and of stimulating joint action among public, school, academic, and special libraries. Federal funds, as well as state funds, are now becoming widely available through legislative acts to school, college, and university libraries, as well as public libraries, and through research and development contracts also to special libraries in business and industrial firms. Assurance is sought that these funds do in fact serve the general interest in the most economical and efficient manner. Title III has arisen from, and is attached to, the LSCA ²⁷

Public libraries, can, therefore, expect to take the lead in effecting the coordination between different types of libraries provided for in Title III.

Because of the unique nature of the public library enterprise, a strong case can be made for the

25. R. C. Swank, *Interlibrary Cooperation under Title III of the Library Services and Construction Act*. California State Library, 1967, pp. 5-6.

26. Joseph Becker and Robert Hayes, *A Proposed Library Network for Washington State*. Olympia, Washington, State Library, 1967.

27. Swank, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-63.

special responsibility of public libraries and public library systems to exercise their full capacity for leadership in bringing about an effective articulation of all segments of the library effort in the communities and regions which they serve. . . . The public library is the only library agency with a broad community mandate, and systems have a special position in planning for total service. . . . Continued progress in library service will depend increasingly on greater sharing of resources and closer interrelationships between types of libraries. . . . Plans for public library system development should recognize that the advanced reference and information needs of users will require the use of resources of academic and special libraries and non-library information networks.²⁸

4. The inter-relationships between the member libraries of the Associated Science Libraries of San Diego should be explored more fully for better utilization of their combined resources to the benefit of all.

In the Black Gold System the reference coordinator is free to do her own research in the academic and special libraries with which the system has established cooperative agreements. The Bay Area Reference Center schedules a continuing series of personnel exchanges between the San Francisco Public Library and the North Bay Cooperative Library System. Such arrangements might be experimented with, not only within the Serra System, but among the Associated Science Libraries. This would permit the librarians of the Serra Reference Center to familiarize themselves with the collections and the handling of

28. Nelson Associates, op. cit., pp. 252-253, 256.

reference questions in the other libraries. Even though the funding for Title III, at this writing, is small, it does permit some imaginative experimentation in patterns of cooperation and the best use of all resources. The Serra System and the Associated Science Libraries of San Diego might together design a project that would have useful results in the San Diego area. As Swank puts it:

A general loosening of traditional lines of responsibility and benefit between types of libraries of all kinds will have to follow the recognition that all citizens have some right to information services that are supported by tax dollars, whether in public, academic, or special libraries.²⁹

5. A well planned public information program should be developed, with professional assistance if needed, a program that is tied, sequentially, to the gradual development of the Reference Center activities, and is adaptable to local differences.

Several of the librarians interviewed were concerned about ways of informing their patrons, present and potential, about the services available through the Serra Reference Center. Unless the usefulness of the Center is known throughout the area which it serves it will have little usefulness. To inform the communities served by the local libraries of the wealth of resources made available to them through the Serra Reference Center all media of

29. Swank, op. cit., p. 52.

communication should be used--talks to local groups and organizations, articles in newspapers and weeklies, house organs, and publications of state and local organizations as well as radio and television.

. . . it [the system] needs to disseminate knowledge of its usefulness widely. Its funds appear to depend more and more on government decision, and it will receive money insofar as its usefulness to the public is clear.³⁰

6. The Executive Committee of the Serra System should keep in touch with the experimentation and rapid developments in the field of communications and keep their own system flexible enough to make changes if it seems appropriate.

The present communication systems of TWX, telephone, truck, and mail delivery seem satisfactory at the present time. As mentioned above, a delivery service between the Area Libraries and the libraries within their area may be needed later. The other systems in the state which were visited were all using various communications media and apparently finding them satisfactory for their purpose. Serra System will need to keep aware of new developments, and their costs, and build a communications system to fulfill its needs. Technical advice may prove helpful at a later point.

30. Nelson Associates, op. cit., p. 253.

7. In-service training, at all levels, should be provided for the nonprofessional people who man desks in the smaller libraries and for continuing education for the professional personnel.

The importance of this cannot be overstressed.

A substantial number of the instances of failure of a library outlet in a system to perform satisfactorily occur because staff members have not fully grasped the system concept and potential, or fail to understand the clearly specified policies, resources, approaches, and relationships developed by the system. Library systems have both a unique responsibility and opportunity to institute and promote strong in-service training programs for professional and nonprofessional staff.³¹

We hardly need Bonn to remind us that:

The success or failure of any information network may well be determined at the very point where the patron with an interest in technical information first comes in contact with library service.

. . . They must be good reference librarians, of course, and they must be adept in dealing with, skeptical, reluctant, confused and often vague individuals. Each one must be able to extract from the patron his exact problem, to interpret that problem exactly and in context to a subject or research center if necessary, and to interpret the answer to the patron when it is found . . . it is people--librarians--who give service, not resources, libraries, systems, or networks.³²

While Mr. Bonn's report was in the field of technical information, his thesis applies to all reference work. The close working arrangements in the Black Gold System, the staff exchanges in the Bay Area Reference Center, are a

31. Nelson Associates, op. cit., p. 252.

32. Bonn, op. cit., pp. 71-72.

form of staff training as well as fuller use of resources. The 49-99 System has developed a correspondence course, covering a variety of subjects, which might be adapted for use in other systems and there are other courses in staff development such as the one from the state of Ohio.³³

The in-service training program should include not only reference work, but also the philosophy and techniques of establishing wider contacts with the community, for giving more specialized service to various community groups, agencies and organizations. Apparently little of this is being done--even contact with the schools is too often left entirely to the schools as if the library had no responsibility to the institutions which it is designed to serve. Unless we are willing to be only the curators of the resources in our charge, unless we want to be the embodiment of that "image" which we resent, we must assume the responsibility of bringing our libraries and their communities together.

The Coordinator of the Reference Project should work with the Reference Center staff, the local librarians and the staff of the University of California at San Diego, the San Diego State College, and the State Library to

33. Donald J. Sager. Reference, a programmed instruction prepared for the Ohio Library Association. State Library of Ohio reference workshops for Library personnel without library degrees. Columbus, Ohio Library Foundation, 1968.

design in-service training for both professional and non-professional staff members. This should include not only the staff of the area libraries, but of all the libraries in both counties. A variety of training techniques can be used--formal courses, short courses, residential workshops, seminars, correspondence courses, etc.

8. The Serra Regional Library System should join with other types of libraries in the area to design a project, suitable for funding under Title III of the LSCA, which would advance their mutual objectives.

San Diego County Library has started producing a book catalog, each branch to have a copy. This might be the beginning of a union list of holdings in the two counties. A project which would make possible a union list of serials held by the different types of libraries in the county could be the next step beyond the Current Periodicals list compiled by the Serra Reference Center.

Area Libraries

The chief charge to this study was that it make recommendations regarding the location of an unspecified number of Area Libraries to serve as connecting links between the Serra Reference Center and the other local libraries. The factors considered in the designation of these libraries, not necessarily in an order of importance, were:

Geographical Location

For easier accessibility when referring patrons to their stronger collections and for speedier borrowing of materials.

Collections

An essential feature of the Area Libraries is that they possess collections of materials in sufficient size and depth to answer many of the questions originating in their own areas, thus relieving the Serra Reference Center of the volume of simpler questions, leaving that staff more time for research, for finding and developing resources and relationships with other libraries. The Area Libraries should possess not only a good range of reference books, but also a strong general collection.

Staff

Since it is "librarians who give service" those libraries which had budgeted the most nearly adequate number of professional positions were deemed in the better position to give good reference service.

Physical Facilities

As the reference service develops, it will bring more patrons into the library. Adequate seating space, where people can use materials in comfort and relative quiet, is necessary. More shelf space will be needed

and more work space for added staff in at least two of the libraries named.

Readiness

This involves the attitudes of the library board and the staff towards participation in the project, their concept of library service and of the function of the reference service, their relationships with the community and with city officials.

No library, of course, met a desirable standard in all of these criteria. The libraries designated are those which seem to have the best combination of desirable factors as a base for development in the future. All of them will need further grants to expand their collections, to add staff and, in some cases, to add space. All of the libraries in the two counties need more local support if they are to give high quality service. It is expected that as state and federal funds become available that each member library will receive additional book funds which can be spent in its area of specialization. Each library is currently receiving such funds. As the population grows, and the need arises, other Area Libraries might be designated. The libraries recommended as Area Libraries are:

Chula Vista Public Library

El Centro Public Library

Oceanside Public Library

San Diego County Public Library

The purpose of the Area Libraries, in cooperation with the Serra Reference Center, is to make all the library resources of San Diego and Imperial counties available to everybody through their local libraries. This will result in quicker, and more thorough, answers to reference questions. It will give the people of both counties access to library materials which their local libraries could not afford to acquire, providing them with better service at less cost than if they attempted comparable service through local funds only. The Area Libraries will specialize in expensive reference books and unusual materials, thereby releasing local funds for materials which are particularly needed in their communities. The Area Libraries will also build up locator files of special subject collections in the area to facilitate reference services. The stronger collections of the Area Libraries, and their larger staffs, will enable them to answer the less difficult questions coming from local libraries, sending on to Serra Reference Center only those complex questions which require research in a large collection. This will free the staff of the Reference Center for consultation, for in-service training and for more intensive research and bibliographic work.

Each local library will exhaust its own resources before turning to the Area Library. The project funds,

some of which they have already received to strengthen their reference collections, are making them better able to do this. The branches of the San Diego and Imperial County libraries will then request service from their Area Libraries. The Imperial County Public Library, and the libraries of Brawley and Calexico will have the services of the El Centro Public Library to draw on before their questions are referred to the greater resources at the Serra Reference Center. South of San Diego the Chula Vista Public Library will augment the reference services of Coronado and National City public libraries. In the northern part of San Diego County Oceanside Public Library will do the same for the Carlsbad Public Library.

By their coordination of services and materials this network of libraries will give better service to the people of San Diego and Imperial counties with the most economical use of public funds.